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Fiftieth Session

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Tuesday, 3 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, His Excellency the Honourable Seymour Mullings.

Mr. Mullings (Jamaica): On behalf of the Government and the people of Jamaica, I congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. As a distinguished representative of Portugal, we are assured that he will be able to bring his undoubted skills to the affairs of this body at this important juncture in the life of the United Nations.

Allow me also to express my appreciation to his distinguished predecessor, Foreign Minister Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, for his very valuable contribution to the work of the forty-ninth session.

I also wish to take this opportunity to extend a welcome to the Republic of Palau, which was admitted to the United Nations on 15 December 1994.

Let me, on behalf of the Government and the people of Jamaica, express our sympathy to the peoples of our sister countries in the Caribbean who recently experienced the ravages of devastating hurricanes. Most of these small islands suffered extensive damage to infrastructure and to their agriculture and tourism industries. Their task of reconstruction will require immediate assistance and support from the international community. I appeal to all gathered here to provide the required support to these Caribbean partners.

Our general debate this year coincides with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This historic occasion affords us the opportunity to reflect on the work and value of the Organization and to chart the way forward into the twenty-first century.

The establishment of the United Nations 50 years ago irrevocably changed the course of world history. With its founding, a new framework for international relations was created. Throughout the last five decades, the world body, buffeted as it has been by the vagaries of an unpredictable and often tense international environment, has achieved remarkable successes in a wide variety of fields, and in many ways and for many millions of people around the world it remains the greatest repository of hope, and the only viable option for ensuring international peace, security and development.

Today we still inhabit an imperfect world where poverty, social and economic inequality between and within States, hunger, disease and environmental

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degradation remain critical issues. Global solutions must be found to what are inevitably global problems. At last we all now agree that the major problems confronting our world are transnational in nature.

Addressing these challenges is a daunting task. However, whereas less than a decade ago the cold-war ideological divide hindered our ability to address them, today we are in a much more favourable position to do so. Today there is greater willingness and capacity to make common cause on a number of issues.

The priority task of our time is to eliminate the fundamental causes of instability and conflict in the global community, a situation rooted in the social and economic conditions affecting the greater part of mankind. As we move into the next century, our commitment to achieving development in all its aspects must be our priority objective. In this regard, Jamaica continues to attach great importance to the work of the United Nations in advancing the Agenda for Development. We believe it provides the rudiments for constructing a sustained development strategy. It is our hope that this historic session of the General Assembly will recognize the importance of the Agenda and give the mandate for its implementation.

The Secretary-General has outlined five dimensions which provide the foundation for action to achieve sustainable development. These are: peace, the economy, environmental protection, social justice and democracy.

It is important that we accept these concepts as mutually reinforcing and interdependent. Development is not possible in the absence of peace and stability. Conversely, the absence of broad-based development and the lack of opportunity to participate in the benefits of material progress constitute a threat to peace and stability.

Economic growth is necessary for development. As the Secretary-General points out in his report,

> "New development approaches should not only generate economic growth, they should make its benefits equitably available. They should enable people to participate in decisions affecting their lives." *(A/49/665, para. 5)*

For sustainable development to be maintained it must be people-oriented in its objective, scope and focus. It needs an environment that gives priority to the promotion of social well-being, integration and advancement; an environment where there is emphasis on the eradication of poverty, on the enhancement of health and education and on productive employment for all.

That is why it is vital that we honour the commitments agreed at major international conferences and integrate them into a common framework for development. The declarations and work programmes of conferences, beginning with the World Summit for Children in 1990, up to and including the recent Fourth World Conference on Women, provide the basis for forging a global consensus on new approaches to social and economic development. The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to be held next year, will further add to the global consensus.

It is in this context that I refer specifically to the World Summit for Social Development, one of the two major global conferences held this year. That Summit provided a forum for discussion and commitment to action on issues of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. In Copenhagen world leaders recognized the central and pervasive theme of poverty and its impediment to social integration. The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action contain universal commitments: a commitment to create a national and international environment conducive to the eradication of poverty; a commitment to enhance productive employment; a commitment to promote social development and foster social integration. All these actions would be taken in a framework of sustainable economic growth and development.

Not only does the Declaration and Programme of Action contain commitments to accelerate economic, social and human resource development: it also specifically sets targets for addressing the seemingly intractable problems facing developing countries. The critical issue is one of resources. It is a daunting challenge.

As part of national policy and consistent with the content of the Declaration and Programme of Action, Jamaica has already committed itself to the alleviation of poverty as a matter of priority.

Permit me to refer to the other important conference held this year, the Fourth World Conference on Women, which was recently concluded in Beijing. Out of that Conference emanated a comprehensive Platform for Action aimed at fostering greater empowerment of women and bringing them fully into the development process.

We recognize that Governments have the main responsibility for undertaking the commitments agreed at these conferences. However, to achieve these goals national efforts must be complemented by effective international cooperation. We therefore join others in urging the international community to collectively fulfil the commitments by channelling substantial new and additional financial and technical resources to developing countries. It is this mobilization of adequate financial resources for development purposes that will determine whether the poorest countries in the world remain excluded from the progress enjoyed by others.

The positive trends in world economic growth cannot mask the dichotomy which persists in the international economy. The efforts by developing countries to implement sound macroeconomic policies and structural adjustment programmes continue to be affected by adverse external economic conditions characterized by protectionism in goods-and-service trade, continuing decline in official development assistance (ODA), volatile financial flows and exchange-rate instability, and constraints in access to technology.

All this is convincing evidence that in the increasingly globalized environment it is imperative that we give greater weight to the whole process of coordination of international economic policy. Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank should further improve their processes to take into account the critical needs and peculiar circumstances of developing countries. This process could be improved further through better consultations between the Group of 77, the Group of 15 and the Group of 7.

Many developing countries have at great cost undertaken reforms in policy and regulatory framework resulting in the creation of a private-sector-led, market-driven economy. These efforts will be rendered meaningless without the existence of a favourable international economic environment. In its absence, efforts to build self-sustaining economies will be frustrated.

With the completion of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) the stage is set for a more open multilateral trading system. In confronting this new and complex trade regime developing countries require production and marketing assistance to gain the potential benefits from the new market opportunities.

It is therefore crucial that a degree of flexibility be given to developing countries to enhance our full participation in the multilateral trading system.

Recent developments and institutional changes, including the establishment of the World Trade Organization, reinforce the need for institutions such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development as a policy-oriented trade forum with a strong development perspective. We should not fail to reflect on the valuable role that has been played by UNCTAD, as well as by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Every effort should be made to preserve those organizations. They were designed to serve the development objectives of the developing countries. They are not above change. They have shown their capacity to adapt to the new environment and to develop concepts and programmes relevant to the present needs of the developing countries. We are therefore opposed to any attempt to undermine the contributions of those bodies to the development objectives within the international system.

In our own region steps are being taken to improve the conditions that will foster proper trading relations among our countries, thereby enhancing the productivity of our economies. The Convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States has now entered into force. The new grouping of 25 States plus associate members represents a strong and viable economic base from which to seize the opportunities offered by the new international economic environment.

In this regard we continue to assert the need for the inclusion of all countries in the region in the integration process. To this end, we reiterate our concern at attempts further to complicate regional-trading arrangements through national legislation that has an overwhelming extra-territorial character.

If I have devoted a substantial portion of my statement to issues of development and international economic and trade policy, it is because Jamaica would like to emphasize the fundamental importance of economic and social development to the attainment of peace and security. We welcome the fact that the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development has rightly been acknowledged as an essential complement to "An Agenda for Peace". We remain committed to a continuing role for the United Nations in the area of peace-keeping.

The current regional and civil conflicts being waged against the backdrop of ethnic and religious antagonism demand that greater emphasis be placed on preventive diplomacy in order to diffuse tensions before they escalate into the violence and bloodshed that we have witnessed in the Balkans and in Central Africa. We must design mechanisms to deal with problems in their early stages and thus prevent the situation whereby the international community finds itself expending more and more resources to deal with an ever-worsening situation. In this regard, urgent action to achieve a rapid-deployment capability should be considered.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the world has been witness to the tragedy of the forcible dismantling of a multi-ethnic and multireligious society. The situation has been a difficult one for the United Nations. It is vital that all efforts be made to bring an end to the fighting, and we hope that the most recent attempts to reach a negotiated settlement will lead to a lasting and comprehensive solution. I wish at this point to express on behalf of the Government of Jamaica our profound regret at the almost- daily loss of life. Our sympathies go to the families of United Nations peace-keepers as well as to the families of the three American diplomats who were engaged in brokering a settlement to the conflict.

We are no less concerned and distressed by the situation in Rwanda and Burundi. We continue to urge the factions to pursue national reconciliation leading towards the economic rehabilitation and reconstruction of their countries.

In our own region, we can be justifiably proud of the role of the United Nations in restoring the democratically elected President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to the leadership of his nation. This was a critical element in the complex diplomatic effort to achieve a solution to the crisis in our sister country. Jamaica joined other countries in the Caribbean Community in contributing to the multinational force in Haiti and subsequently to the United Nations Mission in Haiti. The people of Haiti are now on the path to building democracy. Haiti's success in its efforts to rebuild the economy of the country depends in no small measure on the continued attention of the entire international community.

The success of the United Nations in Haiti leads us to reflect on the often-overlooked achievements of the Organization in providing much-needed humanitarian assistance in situations of conflict.

There are a number of outstanding political issues on the Assembly's agenda that require resolution, among them the situation in the Middle East. We welcome the efforts of the parties to continue the peace process in a spirit of reconciliation in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. We hope that the same spirit of reconciliation will prevail in negotiations to resolve other long-outstanding issues, including that of the situation in Cyprus.

I wish to refer to a matter which we consider one of global concern. Four months ago, the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concluded with a majority of States agreeing that the Treaty should be extended indefinitely. Like other non-nuclear-weapon States, we supported the indefinite extension on the basis of the declared intention of nuclear Powers to exercise restraint in relation to vertical proliferation and nuclear disarmament. In this sense, we view with great disappointment and as a serious blow to the non-proliferation regime the recent decisions by some nuclear-weapon States to resume nuclear testing. Jamaica is opposed to the proliferation of weapons and wishes to reiterate the need for the completion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. In the meantime, we urge nuclear-weapon States to respect the moratorium on nuclear testing.

The progressive development of international law has been a fundamental objective of the United Nations. The entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the inauguration of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, Jamaica, in November last year, represent a major achievement in the creation of a legal order for the management of the seas and oceans as the common heritage of mankind. We urge universal acceptance of the Convention. Jamaica being the host of the Seabed Authority, I can assure the Assembly of its steadfast commitment to provide the enabling environment to ensure that the objectives of the Convention are met.

The establishment of the International Seabed Authority represents the commitment of States parties to have this new international regime operational in the shortest possible time. We are all very disappointed that the first session was concluded without the requisite administrative arrangements in place for commencement of the substantive work of the Authority. I take this important occasion to urge that States parties address the

outstanding issues with the same commitment that was evident in securing the acceptance of the Convention.

We believe the United Nations is now positioned to achieve the objectives of the Charter and to play an active, dynamic and catalytic role in maintaining international peace and security and promoting economic cooperation. Now, more than ever before, there is a real possibility for us to take decisive and universal action to fulfil the purposes for which the Organization was created. We must take advantage of this opportunity. We are conscious of heightened expectations. For these reasons, the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations system must be vigorously pursued. We are confident that a reformed and strengthened Organization will be able to undertake the twin tasks of promoting peace and assisting the development process of all members of the international community.

In the Secretary-General's annual report to the General Assembly this year, he has emphasized, in the context of reforming the United Nations, that

> "A crucial component of that larger reform process should be the achievement of a more dynamic relationship among the main intergovernmental organs — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council." *(A/50/1, para. 20)*

This is a point of view which I share. Jamaica firmly believes that the General Assembly should be allowed to fulfil its role as the Organization's highest deliberative and decision-making body. We also believe that the role of the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened.

It is relevant also to underscore the fact that the United Nations was conceived in an entirely different era. Today, with all the changes which have taken place in the past 50 years, it is indefensible that the same five permanent members of the Security Council can exercise the same control as they did when they assumed that right after the Second World War. For this and other valid reasons, Jamaica supports the call for the expansion of the Security Council, including its permanent membership, on an equitable geographical basis.

Numerous initiatives have been undertaken by Member States, independent groups and individuals on ways to improve the functioning of the Organization. It is now time for the seminal ideas generated by these initiatives to be distilled into a comprehensive framework for designing the new structure of the United Nations. In this regard, Jamaica will participate fully in the High-level Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly, recently established to undertake a thorough review of the studies and reports relating to the revitalization and reform of the United Nations.

The agenda for this fiftieth session is indeed a challenging one. Our goal is to ensure that the Organization is well placed to discharge its responsibilities effectively. There is enough evidence of a disposition to do this, and this gives us hope. As custodians of the future, let us therefore strive to make this a more peaceful, just and prosperous world.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, His Excellency Mr. Wladyslaw Bartoszewski.

Mr. Bartoszewski (Poland) (*spoke in Polish; English text furnished by the delegation*): At the outset, I should like to express warm congratulations to the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, a distinguished statesman and eminent jurist from friendly Portugal.

We also follow with particular appreciation the actions of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose dedication to the cause of peace and economic and social development meets with universal approval.

Three months ago, the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization were inaugurated at a meeting of Nobel Prize winners in San Francisco. Fifty years have passed since the end of the Second World War, which began with the aggression of the forces of the Third Reich against Poland in the early hours of 1 September 1939. As a historian and also an eyewitness to those days, I have a moral right to recall from this rostrum that it was Poland that put a stop to appeasement, a policy that was futile then and is futile today, a policy which, in the long run at any rate, never pays, anywhere.

For Poland, the first victim of the Second World War, that war lasted the longest: five years, eight months and eight days. It ended in victory, but a victory which did not bring the Polish people complete freedom. It was only 45 years later that we achieved the goal for which Polish patriots had fought with dedication: a free and sovereign State in a new, democratic Europe.

Already during that most terrible of wars to date, thought was being given to peace and ways of making it endure. Mindful of their tragic wartime experiences, peoples and States sought to rid the world once and for ever of wars and the sufferings they inflict. That is how the United Nations was born. From the very start, Poland, a founding Member, has played an active part in the activities of the Organization, whose principal purposes were to preserve and consolidate international peace and security, ensure peaceful social and economic development and the right to a decent existence and promote respect for human rights.

The cold war and East-West bipolarity swiftly dashed the newborn hopes for the relaxation of tensions and peace untroubled by political or ideological disputes. Although, happily, a global nuclear cataclysm has not come to pass, for which much of the credit is undeniably due to the United Nations, post-war history abounds with tensions, and humanity has, more than once, found itself on the brink of total war. Instead of providing for recovery from the ravages of war and for human well-being, increasing resources were spent on maintaining a singular balance — the balance of terror through the arms race. The world was divided at Yalta into two hostile camps. Many States, in Central Europe for instance, ended up in the Eastern bloc against the will of their people. If I refer to Yalta, it is not meant as a reproach for a pact that was so heinous for Poland: it is as a warning against future Yaltas, wherever they might be concluded or whomever they might threaten. We want a Europe without political or other divisions, for their consequences would be the same.

Following the geopolitical transformations that originated in Poland in the 1980s and proved unstoppable in the face of the aspirations to freedom of the peoples of that part of Europe and of Asia, the world has become infinitely safer. East-West confrontation has disappeared, for ever, it is hoped, and the terms "East" and "West" have regained their old, purely geographical connotations. Yet the world, though no longer bipolar, has not been freed from conflicts. Hitherto dormant or suppressed, tides of nationalism have surfaced with renewed vigour, often fuelled by intolerance, ethnic and religious strife or outright racism.

Six years after the commencement in 1989 of great changes in the world political map, the anticipated new international order has failed to materialize. The United Nations and all its Members are still actively looking for effective and equitable answers to the new problems that have emerged since the end of the cold war. These political changes present a unique opportunity to build a new system of peaceful cooperation, not of mere coexistence. Our desire is to seek a new world order, one that will ensure full security to all States and provide conditions for their swift social and economic development, while at the same time giving all individuals the opportunity to exercise fully their human rights, to which they are entitled. Of course, there would not be room for any kind of intolerance, manifestations of ethnic, religious or racial hatred, including shameful anti-Semitism.

Poland is aware of, and acknowledges, the momentous role which the United Nations plays in the realization of these goals. An Organization founded by 51 States has grown to become a universal structure embracing almost all the countries of the globe. It is, however, not only the number of Members that has changed: its tasks have also kept growing steadily. While originally the political military question and decolonization predominated, in time the scope of United Nations interests widened, and today it would be hard to identify a single domain where the United Nations system is not involved. Expectations of the United Nations have grown likewise, often excessively, since they were not backed by sufficient political will to provide the Organization with appropriate instruments, which are indispensable if it is to live up to these expectations. I have in mind one of the basic fields of United Nations activities — conflict prevention and settlement. Here the United Nations lends itself relatively easily to attack. One overlooks, however, how much the character of conflicts now confronting the international community has changed. Conventional conflicts between States are now increasingly giving way to internal conflicts, as in Rwanda, in Somalia and, up to a point, in the former Yugoslavia. The traditional mediation role of the United Nations peace-keeping forces, discharged with the consent of the parties to a conflict, has frequently become impossible in present-day conditions. In many cases, United Nations peace-keeping missions come up against the dilemma of having to depart from the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a State torn apart by civil war. Should one remain indifferent and ignore human suffering in such a situation? It is we, the States Members of the United Nations, which are often called upon to answer this question unequivocally, and we are not always able to do so. Inevitably, this adversely affects the success of the mission, the blame for which is all too often and all too easily placed on the United Nations. One tends to forget that we are the United Nations.

Poland takes the view that when a direct threat is posed to international peace and security, the United Nations — if it is to be an efficient instrument of collective security in accordance with the Charter — must be equipped to do its job. We can draw up a long list of conflicts and wars which were brought to an end thanks to United Nations efforts. Millions of human lives have been saved, owing to humanitarian relief action organized by the United Nations — but an equally long list can be produced of undertakings which ended in failure. The fiftieth anniversary should, no doubt, prompt critical reflection on the subject. Defeats and mistakes must not lead to the abdication of efforts. They should encourage the taking of steps to reform and remodel what must be changed, and thus make the United Nations a truly modern Organization, adapted to new circumstances and measuring up to the requirements of the period and its challenges.

In today's interconnected and interdependent world, even the most powerful nations cannot cope alone with such global issues as, for example, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the spread of drugs, hunger and poverty, the pollution of the environment, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and increasingly rampant terrorism — in short, all the ills that are appearing as we approach the end of the century. Consequently, we need to bolster the trend towards enhancement of multilateral institutions, including the United Nations and its system. It was in this spirit that the President of Poland, Lech Walesa, spoke at San Francisco last June when he referred to the Organization's shortcomings in critical terms.

Poland is not only playing its full role in this process: the creation of a new international order is the focal point of its foreign policy at the subregional, regional and global levels. Fully sovereign and independent, today's Poland is one of the largest and most populous countries in Central and Eastern Europe. It strives actively to contribute to ensuring the stability of a region of importance to Europe — a region that forms a natural geographical, cultural and economic bridge between Europe's historically evolved parts. Hence, the basic task of the foreign policy of the Republic of Poland is active participation in, and a creative contribution to, the building of a new Europe — one without divisions and conflicts, ensuring well-being and security to all its inhabitants.

In practice, this policy is manifested in unremitting efforts to integrate Poland into European and Atlantic structures, in acknowledgement of their role as guarantors of the security, stability, democracy and economic development of our continent.

The priority of our foreign policy agenda is entry into the European Union. The Union had its origins in the days of the Marshall Plan, to which Poland declared its accessibility; this was subsequently withdrawn under pressure from outside. Because of the systemic differences and the delay in economic and social development that ensued in the intervening years, the process of adaptation is bound to be difficult, costly and protracted. We are, however, convinced that this is not too high a price to pay for joining a regional organization which, more than any other in history, has been able to ensure its members — apart from political integration — prosperity, a high level of social security and the highest standards of protection of individual rights and freedoms. Expansion eastwards by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union is synonymous with the consolidation of the zone of stability in this once conflict-prone region.

In a foreign policy statement in the Polish Parliament four months ago, I said that Poland was not pursuing, and would not pursue, two different foreign policies: one Western and the other Eastern. In other words, while seeking to join Western European structures, we attach great importance to cultivating friendly relations and all-round cooperation both with our immediate and with our more distant neighbours. We are pursuing cooperation with these States within the framework of the existing subregional organizations and are working for its expansion. We are bound to our neighbours by treaties of good-neighbourly relations, friendship and cooperation. We will spare no effort to eradicate as soon as possible all vestiges of mutual prejudice and any grievances still harboured by our societies.

Poland attaches major importance to the consolidation and expansion of such all-European organizations as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). We support the OSCE role in resolving armed conflicts in our part of the world, in cooperation with the United Nations. We therefore welcome with satisfaction the Conciliation and Arbitration Tribunal established by the OSCE last May. Our active participation in the work of the Council of Europe results from our strong belief that it is of enormous importance in the process of dissemination, reinforcement and

development of democratic institutions and mechanisms for the protection of human rights on our continent.

Finally, reference must be made to Poland's contribution to the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Thanks to its long experience in efforts to overcome the economic divisions that Europe inherited from the recent past, the ECE has a role to play in the process of the economic integration of Europe.

At the same time, I wish to declare Poland's strong support for the useful activities of the regional commissions in general. They should be responsible for coordinating, in each region, the local projects of the United Nations system, especially its specialized agencies, and become regional focal points for the promotion of sustainable growth and human development. The same applies to such subregional initiatives as the Central European Initiative, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, and the Central European Free Trade Association.

While concentrating, understandably enough, on problems connected with the transformation of our political and economic systems, Poland is paying due attention to development processes and trends in the world at large. We are systematically expanding our economic and political contacts with nations on other continents. We are increasingly concerned at the scale of the economic problems looming in North-South relations. The development disparities and contrasts in this area call for an urgent intensification of the efforts of the whole world, and the more advanced countries in particular. We are not always in a position to provide developing countries with aid matching their expectations, but we shall provide it to the extent we can.

We note with satisfaction the vitality of the Non-Aligned Movement, which has been cooperating with the United Nations for many years and which, despite so many changes, remains unfailingly active on the international stage. This Movement played a paramount role in bringing the era of colonialism to an end, has successfully assisted young nations to secure their rightful place in the world and is now laying the foundations for a new era of post-cold-war relations between States, free of global confrontation. Over the last three years, under the presidency of Indonesia, the Non-Aligned Movement has ably redirected its priorities in order to focus its attention on economic development. It embarked on this task on the basis of fruitful dialogue with the developed countries and has greatly contributed to narrowing the gap between the latter and the nations it represents. We take note in particular of the spectacular progress made by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in terms of development, and we acknowledge its efforts to extinguish old conflicts and prevent new ones, to build confidence and to search for new security formulas. Poland is interested in political dialogue and economic cooperation with this group of States, both bilaterally and within a broader Europe-Asia formula. Central Europe also has many characteristics and interests in common with the States of Latin America and their groupings. At the last session of the Economic and Social Council we gave forceful expression to our solidarity with Africa. We believe that cooperation with, and the provision of assistance to, the African continent is in the best interests of the international community.

For its part, Poland is fully conscious of its obligations to the world community, as manifested by its active participation in the work of the United Nations — an organization where States, large, small and medium-sized, like Poland, participate democratically, as far as they can, in a mutual effort to transform the world. We are prepared to assume additional obligations in regard to international peace and security. That is why we have put forward our candidacy for non-permanent membership of the Security Council in the elections to be held during the current session of the General Assembly.

Consistent with the obligations embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the maintenance of international peace and security is central to Poland's foreign policy. Proof of our commitment to this goal has been the participation, since the 1950s, of soldiers and officers of the Polish army in United Nations peace-keeping operations, and more recently in those launched under the auspices of the OSCE.

For many years now, Poland has traditionally been among the 10 States fielding the largest contingents in United Nations peace-keeping operations, despite its mounting financial problems due to the growing delays in the reimbursement of the expenses incurred. Poland is gravely concerned at the increasingly frequent instances of disregard for the status of peace-keeping personnel, such as Blue Helmets being attacked or taken hostage for use as human shields, a practice of which United Nations military observers from Poland have also been the victims. It is for this reason that the entry into force of the relevant Convention and its rigorous observance are extremely urgent.

It is also essential to streamline the functioning of peace-keeping operations. We note with satisfaction the progress already made in this field. However, recent events in the former Yugoslavia demonstrate the need for further steps to be taken to ensure the effectiveness of action, especially in emergency situations. This issue is particularly topical in view of the multiplication of extremely bloody and dangerous internal armed conflicts. The evident impotence of the international community in such situations is due to the fact that, as numerous examples in the last few years bear out, international organizations, by their very nature, are not prepared for active intervention in internal conflicts. These examples also demonstrate that the only possible basis for the resolution of an internal conflict is an accord between the warring parties. We therefore believe that the primary task of the United Nations is to strive unflaggingly, as it has often done so effectively in the past, to bring the parties to a conflict to the negotiating table, to broker an agreement between them and to supervise its implementation. The relevance of preventive diplomacy to both intra-State and international conflicts, and the United Nations role in that respect, were rightly recalled by my Australian colleague, Senator Gareth Evans.

Another key facet of international security is the issue of disarmament. In this area we welcomed, with joy and relief, the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, arrived at last May by consensus. We pay tribute to the wisdom and farsightedness displayed by all participants, without exception, at the Review and Extension Conference in New York.

The road that has brought the world to an unbelievable build-up of nuclear arsenals was long and costly. Today we realize that embarking on this same road in the opposite direction, towards disarmament, will be equally long, costly and complicated. The indefinite extension of the NPT was an act of enormous significance. The next task — no less difficult and just as momentous — will be the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, which should take place no later than in 1996. Special importance, in our view, should also be attached to the entry into force and practical implementation of the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, an instrument which Poland ratified last July. In all these matters, Polish diplomacy has played, and will continue to play, an active role.

Poland believes that progress in disarmament in the field of weapons of mass destruction should be paralleled by a simultaneous and equally tangible effort in the field of conventional weapons, a category of arms that over the last half-century has inflicted tens of millions of casualties in countless regional and internal conflicts. The inescapable conclusion is that the United Nations needs to go beyond the limited aims of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and that the problems of conventional arms control and disarmament have to be put on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. This is important not only because of the specific nature of the contemporary conflicts the United Nations has to deal with, but also because of the need to put an end to the mounting wave of internal and international terrorism in an increasing number of countries. There can be no doubt that terrorism and organized crime in general, as well as illegal traffic in radioactive materials and drugs, represent today a serious threat to security. Determined action is therefore needed. Its success will depend on broad international cooperation within the United Nations system — I refer to the Vienna institutions — as well as outside the United Nations system.

Economic development is an extremely important and, in recent years, increasingly significant sphere of activity of the organs of the United Nations system. Economic development problems, together with social issues, have been the subject of a number of major international conferences. The agendas of conferences already held and those of the ones to be convened in the next two years address virtually all development-related problems. What is now indispensable is to concentrate efforts on the conscientious and coordinated implementation of their decisions, a matter of which account should also be taken in the planned reform of the United Nations system.

We appreciate the incipient changes that are appearing in the attitude of the Bretton Woods institutions with regard to the question of the social dimension of development processes, especially the elimination of poverty and unemployment. These issues clearly stood out at the Copenhagen social summit and at the session of the Economic and Social Council held in Geneva earlier this year. This bolsters the hope that the efforts of the poorer countries to cope with the contingencies of socio-economic development will obtain external financial support. We do not share the view that developing countries or, for that matter, nations that, like Poland, are in the throes of transformation, are contributing to unemployment in the more developed parts of the world. We do not accept the argument that trade with low-wage countries might threaten the economic stability of such

developed countries. According to the findings of the latest studies by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the less-developed countries represent, first and foremost, new markets that are of interest to multinational corporations. Let me note in this connection that Poland has been recently classified as one of the world's 10 biggest emerging markets.

Specific opportunities have also been created by the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the establishment of the World Trade Organization. In the short term, however, the liberalization of world trade could be too great a challenge to the weakest partners, especially in Africa. We are in favour of safety-net arrangements for countries in this category.

We also perceive a development paradox of our times: cut-backs in agricultural production in some parts of the world because of excessive stocks of food and for purposes of checking falling prices are paralleled by the existence of endemic famine areas in other parts of the world. In an interdependent world such as ours, there is something baffling in this situation. The United Nations should be the forum in which to address this difficult and conscience-troubling problem. The solution is not simply one of redistribution. The crux of the matter lies in helping these countries to help themselves by stimulating their capacity for self-reliance instead of perpetuating their dependence.

Lastly, the third area crucial to the well-being of future generations, to which Poland attaches particular importance, is the question of human rights. Today, six years into the process of democratic change, Poland can pride itself on having a legal system which meets the most rigorous international standards in the field of respect for and comprehensive protection of human rights.

Poland has not confined itself to taking care of internal problems in that regard. In the past few years it has been pursuing wide-ranging activities in the United Nations organs concerned with human rights and the development of international mechanisms for their protection. Undoubtedly, in this field the Vienna Human Rights Conference of 1993 was a landmark event. Polish diplomacy was extremely active both at the preparatory stage and in the course of the Conference. From the outset we strongly endorsed the establishment of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was one of the principal achievements of the Vienna Conference. Since the appointment of Ambassador Ayala Lasso to this important post we have given him our full cooperation and support.

Of its very nature, the United Nations does not have the means to force either States or armed groupings to respect the rights of citizens and to comply with international obligations in this field. Violations of humanitarian law and the laws of war are rife. The timid response to the systematic reports by the Human Rights Commission's Special Rapporteur, the former Polish Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, of drastic violations of human rights in the former Yugoslavia resulted in his resignation from his mission. We note with satisfaction statements from this rostrum recognizing the significance of his endeavours.

The upgrading of the status of human rights within the structure of United Nations organs, the General Assembly included, is essential. The basic tasks of our Organization in this field should be the promotion of permanent international dialogue on the protection of human rights, the development of mechanisms for overseeing compliance with international obligations and the increase of technical assistance by rich and experienced nations to countries which lack the necessary resources. Appropriate funds for this purpose should be made available to the High Commissioner and the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva.

Ever since the foundation of the United Nations 50 years ago the tasks facing the Organization have grown in number and complexity. The political and economic environment in which these tasks have to be coped with also keeps changing, as demonstrated by the decisions of the latest major Conferences — in Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing. That calls for the continuous adaptation of the organizational structures and procedures to new tasks and changing circumstances. It is imperative to enhance the methods of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Equally important is the effort further to develop the system of international law so that it can regulate more adequately and with greater precision the rights and obligations of its subjects in the ever growing number of areas of their mutual relations. The importance of these problems, United Nations reform included, has not escaped the attention of our distinguished Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The reform of the United Nations is therefore a pressing task. It is necessary in respect of the principal

organs, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in the first place, and the countless subsidiary bodies. Poland appreciates the results of efforts made so far to enhance the work of the Security Council. As a result, we have a Council which is both more efficient and more than ever responsive to the need for greater transparency in its proceedings. Poland wishes to express its support for the acceleration of steps aimed at an appropriate expansion of the Council's composition, to render it more representative without detriment to its effectiveness. The reform of the Organization must aim at upgrading its efficiency and remedying its financial situation, while keeping intact the basic principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members. However, the most important issue is efficiency, without forgetting that, as an intergovernmental Organization, the basic task of the United Nations is to cement partner-like cooperation between its Members, and recalling that it can act only on their authority. The ultimate success of the reform will be the best contribution we can make to the observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization.

Let me add the voice of Poland to all those statements which, on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, conveyed from this rostrum unequivocal assurances of confidence in the future of our Organization and in its ability to cope with the challenges that face us on the threshold of the twenty-first century. For its part, Poland is ready to participate in these efforts for the sake of future generations so that, in contrast to my own, they will never experience war, be it hot or cold, and so that they can live in a world founded on principles of cooperation, good-neighbourly relations and mutual trust.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform Members that the General Assembly will not hold a general debate on Thursday morning, 5 October. Instead, the General Assembly will hold a ceremonial session to listen to the statement of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, from the observer State of the Holy See, as part of the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The ceremonial session will take place at 10.30 a.m., and the general debate will be resumed on Thursday afternoon.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya, His Excellency the Honourable Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka.

Mr. Musyoka (Kenya): Let me, at the outset, congratulate His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his unanimous election as President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. His wide diplomatic experience and intellectual abilities reinforce our confidence in his stewardship. I wish him success in the heavy task before us.

Mr. Ouane (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I also pay tribute to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, who ably presided over the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

We commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the untiring and visionary manner in which he is managing the affairs of the Organization.

Kenya is fully committed to the ideals of this Organization. Indeed, Kenya's motto, "Harambee" which means "pull together", and the national philosophy of peace, love and unity, are fitting expressions of what the United Nations and the Kenyan people aspire to. Kenya has always championed the principles of democracy and the pursuit of socio-economic development to enhance the living standards of the people.

Under the leadership of His Excellency President Daniel T. Arap Moi, Kenya has undertaken far-reaching political and economic reforms, whose benefits we are beginning to see. Our economy is now totally liberalized in keeping with our tradition of providing an environment conducive to enterprise development. Our democratic institutions have developed the necessary flexibility to cope with the new situations and to ensure continuity of the political stability which the country has enjoyed since independence.

We have observed a systematic campaign to denigrate African countries. It is as though there were an agenda to bring them into international disrepute. We reject these destructive approaches designed to promote divisive elements and to manipulate domestic public opinion with a view to pitting people against their own Governments. Kenya also condemns in the strongest terms the tendency in certain sectors of the international press to present the image of African countries in terms of tribal superiority or inferiority, to inflame ethnic conflicts and to depict the continent as replete with corruption and catastrophes. Africa deserves credit for its arduous struggle against external domination. We are determined to create cohesive and prosperous States after many years of destructive colonial policies of divide and rule, which constituted gross violations of human rights.

I wish to assure the Assembly that the Government and the people of Kenya are determined despite the odds to continue the struggle to forge national unity and to accelerate socio-economic development. Our commitment, which I underscore, to the principles of democracy, good governance, the protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law remains firm.

It is against that background that I wish now to address some of the issues on the agenda of the General Assembly. In the time since its inception, the United Nations has evolved into a truly global organization, as envisaged in the Charter. Its membership has grown from 50 at its inception to 185 today. Its activities have ranged from decolonization, the codification of international law, disarmament and conflict resolution to global humanitarian activities and international economic cooperation. The achievements in these areas are, indeed, self-evident. The demands on the Organization have, however, exerted maximum pressure on its ability to cope. Hence the need for the Organization to be revitalized at this opportune time.

Five years after the end of the cold war the international community still faces a number of conflicts, which are of great concern as they continue to undermine international peace and security. These conflicts have posed serious challenges owing primarily to complexities associated with their internal character. We nevertheless appreciate the flexibility with which the United Nations is dealing with these conflicts and the commendable successes which have been achieved in resolving a good number of them. These achievements include the resolution of the conflicts in Namibia, Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador and Haiti. Success becomes even more pronounced when we consider the extent to which the United Nations has effectively mobilized international humanitarian assistance in virtually all conflict areas, through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other United Nations agencies.

At the forty-seventh session the General Assembly mandated the Secretary-General to pursue preventive diplomacy and to strengthen the Secretariat's capacity to cope with situations likely to endanger international peace and security. To that end, the Secretary-General's initiatives "An Agenda for Peace" and the subsequent Supplement to that document have made a significant contribution to this important subject. I wish to record Kenya's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his personal efforts and initiatives in search of lasting international peace and security. We look forward to the results of the work of the informal working groups that have been set up to consider in greater depth the various elements contained in the Agenda.

We note the recent initiatives taken with a view to strengthening the role of regional organizations in conflict resolution and conflict management. Kenya, however, wishes to reiterate that the thrust of the contributions of regional organizations and arrangements should be targeted towards preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. We submit that peace-keeping and peace enforcement should remain the primary responsibility of the United Nations. These responsibilities are enshrined in the Charter and cannot be transferred to regional organizations. We encourage closer cooperation in this regard between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations on the basis of the Charter and the agreement on cooperation between the two organizations.

With regard to regional conflicts, Kenya welcomes the important steps towards long-lasting peace that we have recently witnessed in the southern part of Africa. Following the positive resolution of the conflict in Mozambique, recent developments in Angola give us high expectations for a durable solution of the protracted conflict in that sisterly country.

At a time when the world is championing the cause of peace, democracy and human rights, it is totally unacceptable that a band of mercenaries should overthrow the Government of the Comoros and hold the President and Government officials captive. Kenya condemns this act in the strongest terms possible and calls on the Security Council to take necessary measures to rectify the situation.

With respect to Liberia, we welcome the recent signing of an agreement by all the warring parties, in which they have committed themselves to a programme for the restoration of democracy to culminate in general elections in a year's time. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) should be congratulated for the efforts and sacrifices it has made in the search for a lasting solution to the Liberian conflict. United Nations involvement in the resolution of the Liberia conflict, which has been minimal so far despite the magnitude of the problem, should be enhanced. It is, therefore, important that the United Nations should enhance its support to the peace efforts in Liberia to ensure that the momentum for peace is sustained.

In the Middle East, the process towards durable peace achieved another important milestone with last week's signing of a further agreement between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), extending Palestinian self-rule over the West Bank. We commend the vision and courage of these leaders and encourage them and other leaders in the region to broaden the peace process.

The situation in Somalia continues to be a matter of great concern to Kenya. As long as the situation in Somalia remains unstable, the countries of the region, and in particular my own, will continue to experience problems associated with the influx of refugees and with a lack of security in the border region. While we commend humanitarian efforts in Somalia, we are deeply concerned that there has been no tangible progress in national and political reconciliation in that country. We call on the factional leaders to put the interests of the Somali people first and to be cognizant of the fact that a lasting solution to the Somali problem lies with the Somali people and their leaders.

The conflict in the former Yugoslavia poses one of the greatest challenges to the capacity of the United Nations to facilitate the search for durable peace. We appreciate all the diplomatic initiatives which have been undertaken to bring about a negotiated settlement, and we encourage all the parties to intensify their efforts for lasting peace. I wish to pay tribute to all United Nations military, civilian and humanitarian personnel for the sacrifices they have made to advance the cause of peace in that region. Kenya has made a significant contribution to peace-keeping operations in the former Yugoslavia, having contributed one battalion as well as military observers and civilian police over the last four years.

We welcome the establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry to investigate the assassination of the former Head of State and senior Government officials and the subsequent massacres of civilians in Burundi. We would also welcome the establishment by the Security Council of a commission to oversee compliance with arms embargos against groups and individuals undermining peace and security in the Central African region.

Kenya stresses the importance of reconciliation and tolerance and appeals to the international community to continue to assist the countries of the Great Lakes region to deal with the root causes of the problems that have bedevilled them for many years, as well as with their reconstruction efforts. In particular, the security of populations and the resettlement of refugees must be adequately and comprehensively addressed.

The results of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in May this year, constitute a significant contribution to the realization of a nuclear-free world. The commitments and the security assurances made by the nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States should strengthen the resolve of the international community towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is therefore necessary that these commitments be translated into binding international legal instruments.

Kenya looks forward to the conclusion, by 1996, of the comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We join the international community in reiterating the call for strict observance of the moratorium on nuclear testing pending the conclusion of that treaty.

The world economy as a whole continues to show modest growth, with the highest performance being experienced in South-East Asia. However, many economies in the African region are still sluggish, although there are signs of recovery. The continent remains highly vulnerable to adverse international economic policies, as well as natural calamities, owing to its limited capacity to respond.

Kenya and many other African countries have undertaken major political and economic reforms despite the enormous short-term adverse effects on the vulnerable social groups, particularly in regard to the escalating costs of, for instance, education, health and housing. These efforts, however, have been hampered by the decline in both bilateral and multilateral financial support, resulting in limited prospects for economic growth. In this regard, we urge the international community to provide adequate resources to support these reforms.

As the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary it is imperative that development support be accorded the priority that it obviously deserves. The international commitment relating to the fulfilment of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product should be given the necessary impetus to reverse the declining trend. Kenya appeals to the industrialized countries to meet the official development assistance target and to provide new and additional resources to

finance the programmes adopted by the various United Nations Conferences.

Debt-servicing obligations should not become an obstacle to efforts aimed at the creation of employment, the reduction of poverty and social integration. While we welcome the various measures taken by the international community, on bilateral and multilateral bases, to mitigate the debt burden, it is evident that these measures have achieved only limited results. Kenya believes that a lasting solution to the debt burden is a bold initiative for a more effective reduction, or cancellation, of both the bilateral and the multilateral debt of the heavily indebted low-income countries, particularly in Africa.

While the liberalization of world trade, in the context of the World Trade Organization, is expected to benefit the international community, there are strong indications that the results may not benefit all regions. The opening of the African market to external competition has already put serious strain on the fragile industrial sector of these countries. Furthermore, the phasing out of the preferential trade arrangements extended to African and other developing countries poses a serious threat to their traditional markets. African countries therefore need support if they are to diversify their economies.

It is pertinent that "An Agenda for Development" should embrace all the programmes to which the international community has already committed, or will commit, itself in the various international conferences, including the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, the Copenhagen Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II), to be held in Istanbul, Turkey.

It is also important that HABITAT II come up with a concrete plan of action that will give HABITAT, as the United Nations agency responsible for human settlements, an enhanced mandate, with an effective capacity to assist Member States, particularly developing countries, to deal with the increased problems of human settlements and thus enable them to have adequate shelter — one of the fundamental human rights.

It is imperative that the Agenda accord the highest priority to the development of national and regional capacities. It should also be people-centred, with the emphasis on human-resources development, the application of science and technology and the expansion of employment and income-generating opportunities.

At the global level, the United Nations Economic and Social Council should not only assume effective coordination of the international policies and activities of the specialized agencies but also ensure the mobilization of resources for operational activities which are critical for the realization of socio-economic development.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides a great opportunity for the international community to focus constructively on the measures that should be taken to revitalize the Organization on the basis of the experience gained and the challenges ahead. Kenya is of the view that the Organization has proved its effectiveness and flexibility in dealing with complex and wide-ranging international issues. The United Nations, therefore, does not require radical transformation but, rather, the strengthening and modification of its structures and organs to enhance its effectiveness and responsiveness to new priorities and strategies.

It is vital that the Organization continue to cater adequately for both international peace and security and cooperation for development, in accordance with the Charter. Revitalization of the United Nations entails not only the need to streamline the administrative structures of the Organization but also the need to ensure that it is provided with adequate resources, on a regular and assured basis, to enable it to execute the mandates entrusted to it by the Member States.

The report of the ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on reform of the Security Council has highlighted the pertinent areas requiring reform. There is consensus on the need to expand the membership of the Council. Kenya urges greater flexibility in the positions taken so that agreement can be reached on the number and distribution of the additional seats on the basis of equitable geographical distribution for all categories. This could be achieved through expansion of the membership to include more countries from the regions that are currently underrepresented and by effecting periodic reviews of the permanent membership to take account of the evolving realities of the world situation.

With regard to the question of financing, we are concerned that the operations of the Organization have been greatly hampered by the failure of many Member States to honour their budgetary obligations in full and on time. Irrespective of the outcome of the reform process,

the timely payment of United Nations apportionments will continue to be of crucial importance to the financial soundness of the Organization. The financing of the Organization is a collective responsibility of all the Member States. Unilateral actions relating to budgetary contributions are therefore inconsistent with the provisions of the Charter. It is only through necessary and thorough assessment of the individual countries' capacity to pay that the scale of assessments can be adjusted.

As the United Nations continues to introduce measures to ensure the reduction of waste and to deal with the financial crisis, it is imperative that the Organization ensure the maximum and rational use of the existing facilities. All meetings and conferences under the auspices of United Nations bodies should, to the extent possible, be held in Nairobi — the only United Nations Centre in the whole of the developing world.

We are, indeed, concerned about the very low utilization rate of the conference facilities in Nairobi pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report on United Nations Conference Services. In this regard, Kenya wishes to see the United Nations make full use of the facilities available at the United Nations Centre in Gigiri, the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT).

Kenya has offered to host in Nairobi the secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to make it possible to utilize the expertise and capacity which UNEP has developed over the years. We look forward to the support of the international community in this regard.

Let us not lose the opportunity offered by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to renew our resolve to make the Organization fulfil the aspirations of peace, hope and stability that inspired the founding fathers of this Organization. As we move into the next millennium, we must endeavour to make this world a better place to live in. Kenya will play its part as necessary.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, His Excellency Mr. Farouk Al-Shara.

Mr. Al-Shara (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is my pleasure at the outset to express my congratulations to Mr. Freitas do Amaral personally, and to his friendly country, Portugal, upon his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are confident that his experience, wisdom and statesmanship will contribute to the success of this session's deliberations. May I assure him of the cooperation of the Syrian delegation in achieving the desired objectives. May I also extend the expression of our thanks and appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for his untiring efforts during his presidency of the previous session.

On this occasion, we should like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his efforts to enhance the standing and role of the United Nations and to focus the international community's attention on the most outstanding issues of our times.

This session of the General Assembly has great significance in the life of the United Nations, as it coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of this international Organization which remains, notwithstanding any criticisms, an unequalled organization in the history of international relations. It is the house under whose roof the representatives of all the world's States meet each year: friends and foes, adversaries and allies, on the basis of commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, foremost among which are: maintenance of international peace and security; respect for the fundamental rights of men and of States, both small and large; affirmation of equality under those rights; non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and standing up to aggression in accordance with the principles of justice and international law.

The problem facing the United Nations, in our belief, does not lie in the purposes and principles of the Charter, but rather in the decision-making mechanism in the United Nations and in the selective manner of implementing those decisions. Furthermore, the grave financial crisis afflicting this international Organization is in fact but the reflection of a political crisis fundamentally centred on the identity of the United Nations and its role in the post-cold- war period. The question that arises in this context is: does this international Organization truly represent the aspirations of its Members' peoples, as stated in the preamble of its Charter, namely, "We the peoples of the United Nations"? Is it not surprising to hear even the State with the largest population and the largest surface area complain, despite its permanent membership in the Security Council, of interference in its internal affairs?

Given such a situation, will it be feasible to introduce meaningful democratic reforms of the United Nations structure that would be acceptable and agreeable to the Organization's Member States, both large and small, rich and poor, of the North or of the South? Or is it that the democracy of the majority by which national decisions are taken is not valid for decision-making in the United Nations or in international relations?

In any case, we do not live in an ideal world, even if we aspire after such a world. We are convinced that it is essential to promote constructive international dialogue and cooperation if we are to achieve the introduction of reforms that, both in substance and in form, would realize the aspirations of Member States and address the issues and needs of developing countries. Top of the list of those needs is the alleviation of the developing countries' debt burdens, encouraging investments in their economies, opening markets to their products and lifting any restrictions on the transfer to them of sophisticated and nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes.

Over and above all this, what the developing countries need is that their political, humanitarian and cultural issues should be dealt with by dialogue on a basis of mutual respect and non-interference in their internal affairs. That indeed would be the most appropriate and correct means of laying the foundations of an international cooperation with a human face, which would guarantee the interests of all and, thereby, lead to a more secure, stable and prosperous world.

The changes which the world has been witnessing in the international area since the beginning of the 1990s, no matter how tremendous their impact and their results could be, will never alter the fundamental principles and values that humanity has struggled to attain and adhere to since the dawn of history. Right cannot be turned around overnight to become wrong, just exactly as equality cannot be turned around to become hegemony, racism cannot be made a virtue and the occupation of the land of others by force cannot be legitimized.

We live in a region which is the birthplace of the three revealed religions and of human civilizations. Our roots in the region go very deep. We read, hear and, indeed, feel how Israel attempts to falsify the history and geography of this region as well as the achievements of its peoples. We see how it attempts to mislead public opinion into the conviction that its democracy and its laws shall determine the fate of the occupied Arab territories, and not the principles of international law and the resolutions of the United Nations. Those resolutions consider as null and void Israel's annexation of Al-Quds and the application of its laws to the Golan, and require Israel to withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories in order for a just and comprehensive peace to be achieved in the region.

The fact that Israel does not heed the resolutions of the United Nations, regardless of the negotiations that have been going on for four years, is an act of defiance not only *vis-à-vis* the Arabs, but also of the entire international community and, especially, of the Security Council and its relevant resolutions.

The latest developments in the peace process have shown that Israel's rulers are not interested in seeking a genuine, just and comprehensive peace that would put an end to strife, occupation and colonial settlement and guarantee security and stability to all. Their main concern has been to extract from those who negotiate with them signatures on hundreds of pages and maps which shackle the Palestinian people, after all the great sacrifices it has made, and thrust that people on an endless road of loss and agony, not on any road that would lead to liberation and independence.

In our view, agreements of this type, which will lead to yet another endless series of negotiations and agreements, will never pass the test of the final solution, simply because each and every one of them carries within it the seeds of tension and conflict.

Since the Oslo agreement, Syria has made it clear, from this rostrum, that it neither supports nor seeks to obstruct such agreements. Today, while we reiterate this position, we must point out that if such agreements are used to cause harm to Syria's national and pan-Arab interests and rights, we shall be compelled to reconsider that position.

The American initiative, on the basis of which the Madrid Conference was convened, asserted that its aim was to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. Furthermore, among the guarantees given to Syria by the United States of America was that the United States would not agree to the annexation by Israel of one single inch of the Golan territory occupied in 1967. It was on that basis that Syria opened the door of peace in the Madrid Conference. Syria will continue to hold fast to these foundations, which in substance signify a continuing American commitment to Syria's fundamental

rights and interests. The force of this American commitment is not altered by the deviation by some Arab parties from the Madrid formula, whose staunchest advocate ought to be the United States, a sponsor of the Conference.

Contrary to Israel's claims, the Madrid formula and the American initiative did not call for secret negotiations and did not provide for a specified level of negotiators. Had it been otherwise, there would have been no need whatsoever to hold the Madrid Conference. Syria and the Arab States expect the United States, as a sponsor of the peace process, to fulfil its commitments towards Syria and Lebanon and to seek to eliminate the obstacles that Israel continues to put on the road to a just and comprehensive peace in the region that would lead to Israel's complete withdrawal from the Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and also from Southern Lebanon, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

Syria reaffirms its commitment to peace on the basis of the foundations which launched the peace process and on no other bases or other formulae, whose only aim would be to satisfy Israel's arrogance and entrench its hegemony and not to bring to the peoples of the region the security, stability and dignity after which they aspire.

Israel can fool some people some of the time, but it cannot fool all people all the time. The negotiations between Syria and Israel over the past four years have shown that Israel wishes to negotiate only for the purpose of equivocating and backpedalling from the requirements of peace or for the purpose of using the negotiations as a means of imposing its conditions, which contradict the letter and spirit of the relevant Security Council resolutions. This is the real reason why the negotiations on the Syrian track have faltered.

In any case, a false peace will never find its way into any Syrian home, regardless of the challenges and the obstacles created by Israel. All our Syrian citizens know that Arabs, Muslims and all peoples who put their faith in justice and peace stand steadfastly by Syria and its leader in the battle for a just and comprehensive peace, a genuine peace that the people can embrace with dignity.

Armed conflicts and devastating wars continue to rage in various parts of the world. Those conflicts which inflict great human and material losses on the peoples of the States they afflict have begun to cast lengthening dark shadows on regional and world peace and stability.

The indescribable suffering of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina makes it necessary for the international community to intensify efforts to achieve a just settlement that would guarantee the unity and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and safeguard the security and stability of the Balkan region.

Syria reaffirms its attachment to safeguarding the unity of the territory and people of Iraq and its rejection of any attempt at dividing Iraq or at interfering in its internal affairs. Syria believes that a speedy implementation by the Iraqi Government of the remaining Security Council resolutions, side by side with resolving the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners, would facilitate working for lifting the embargo and mitigating the suffering of the brotherly Iraqi people.

Syria calls also for responding to the initiative of the League of Arab States regarding the Lockerbie crisis. This initiative would lead to a solution to the crisis and thereby put an end to the embargo imposed on brotherly Libya.

Syria hopes that a peaceful solution will be reached to the three-island crisis between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran, through direct dialogue, in the interests of cooperation and good-neighbourliness between the two countries. Settlement of the issue will guarantee the rights of both parties and uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States of the region.

Syria calls on all the warring factions in Somalia to end the infighting and to overcome their differences in the interests of national reconciliation, which is indispensable for restoring security and stability to that country and for stimulating efforts to reconstruct the country and restore its Arab and international role.

My country, Syria, had the honour of participating in the founding of this international Organization, whose fiftieth anniversary is now being celebrated. While the pages of history mention other organizations which did not rise to the expectations of the world's peoples, the survival of our organization for the past five decades is testimony to the loftiness of the purposes and principles of its Charter. Despite the conflicts and challenges faced by today's world, we look to the future with optimism. History does not march backwards and every stage of development and change cannot but be better than the one before. Wars that have flared up in more than one part of

the world cannot but recede gradually, then peter out and exist no more.

This is our hope. Peace which is not achieved today will dawn tomorrow. This is what we shall try to achieve looking forward to a better life of justice and humaneness in that it will be built on cooperation between our nations in the political, economic and cultural fields, in the interests of all mankind.

Let us hope that the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations will be a bright beacon of change in the history of mankind.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman, His Excellency Mr. Yousef bin Alawi bin Abdullah.

Mr. Abdullah (Oman): At the outset allow me, on behalf of my country's delegation, to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of this important session of the General Assembly. His unanimous election to this high office attests to the role that his friendly country, Portugal, with which my country has enjoyed centuries of ties, plays in the international arena. His election is also testimony to his ability and wide diplomatic experience which, we are sure, will enable the General Assembly to achieve the results we hope for.

I should also like to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, for the skill and constructive manner in which he steered the work of the forty-ninth session.

The convening of this session coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the international community's agreement to establish the United Nations in order to safeguard international peace and security after the experience of two world wars. We are aware of the significant role that the United Nations has played ever since the end of the Second World War in maintaining the balance between the world Powers during what was known as the cold war era. That outstanding role of the United Nations was at the heart of the international cooperation that was given concrete form in enabling the peoples of the third world, with the help of the United Nations, to free themselves from the shackles of colonialism in Africa, Asia and South America. The United Nations bodies and specialized agencies helped the newly independent States to organize their socio-economic resources thanks to the persistent efforts of the Secretaries-General who headed the Secretariat and the respective Executive Secretaries of the specialized agencies. Here it is only fitting to remember Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, the Organization's second Secretary-General, who gave his life while working on behalf of the United Nations in the Congo in 1961. We should also remember those who were at the helm of the Secretariat beside Mr. Hammarskjöld — Mr. Trygve Lie, the first Secretary-General, U Thant, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, Mr. Jávier Perez de Cuéllar and the current Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali — who have all played a significant role in strengthening mutual understanding amongst nations and helped the world to find peaceful solutions to its conflicts.

The history of the United Nations is full of many other figures who played an important role in promoting its march and in serving international peace and security. By way of example I mention Count Bernadotte, the International Peace Mediator in Palestine; General Burns, the Commander of the International Emergency Force in the Middle East; Mr. Gunnar Jarring, the International Peace Mediator between the Arabs and Israelis after the war of 1967; Mr. James Grant, the late Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund; Sadruddin Aga Khan, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for many years; the late Olaf Palme, former Prime Minister of Sweden; the late Willy Brandt, former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany; Mr. Brian Urquhart, the former Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; and many other brilliant figures who worked tirelessly and faithfully in these corridors.

We should also like to mention in particular the great achievements of the United Nations in the framework of its specialized agencies. Nobody can deny the achievements of these agencies in their respective fields of competence such as food and agriculture, science and education, civil aviation, architecture, reconstruction, health, postal services and telecommunications, meteorology, intellectual property, development, the liberalization of trade, not to mention the brilliant achievements of the humanitarian and development organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as well as the remarkable role played by the other relevant regional

organizations and committees within the framework of the United Nations.

These achievements constitute part of the rich assets accumulated by the United Nations over the 50 years that have elapsed since it was established with the aim of maintaining international peace and security. We believe that although the Organization has come a long way in laying the foundations of international peace and security, global peace in its broadest sense has yet to be achieved. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us all to support the United Nations in its forward movement in that direction so that the edifice of peace and international security may be completed and maintained.

The establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) with the aim of organizing and coordinating world trade, eliminating the obstacles that obstruct access to foreign markets and encouraging the movement of capital and investment is another milestone on the way towards consolidating the edifice of international peace and security. The WTO should receive every support from the international community. The agreement on its establishment under the auspices of the United Nations should be an incentive and a challenge to the developing countries to promote the level of their economic and social development, increase their productive capacity and upgrade the level of their services in order for them to qualify to integrate their interests with those of the developed countries.

By the same token, the establishment of the WTO with the aim of achieving international economic balance on a basis of justice, equality and sustainable development, in no way remits the developed countries' obligations towards supporting and assisting the developing countries in working for that integration of their economies with the economies of the developed countries. As a matter of fact, those obligations are stipulated in the WTO agreement.

In the context of the United Nations action to consolidate the foundations of international peace and security, the Organization has managed, after 14 years of strenuous efforts, to conclude the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982. The entry into force of that Convention on 16 November 1994 is but another example of international cooperation in order to establish an equitable, just international order to govern the ocean space. Also, the recent efforts in this context with regard to Part XI of this important international Convention will no doubt enhance its universality.

In the area of disarmament, the United Nations has performed an outstanding role, even at the height of the cold war, as evinced by the signing of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The signing by more than 159 States of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction is yet another historic United Nations achievement. The Convention was the first to deal with the elimination of this category of overkill weapons on a global scale. It paved the way for agreement on the elimination of all other weapons of mass destruction.

As regards the protection of the environment, the international community has witnessed the dedication of world leaders at the 1992 Rio Conference to the task of halting the degradation of the environment. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and Agenda 21 that resulted from this unique Conference have laid the foundations of a world partnership that addresses the problems of desertification, poverty and the degradation of the ecosystem which arise from the unrestrained use of natural resources.

All these conventions and programmes have gone on the record book as uncontested achievements accomplished by the United Nations. Such achievements apart, however, the United Nations has proved to be unable to cope with regional political issues that have international dimensions and are closely related to risks that could jeopardize international peace and security. When the cold war ended, regional problems erupted on the heels of each other and faced the United Nations and regional organizations alike with a real challenge.

With regard to the Middle East question, which we believe to be one of the most significant issues that concern the world at large, an important breakthrough has taken place on 28 September 1995, when the Israeli and Palestinian sides signed an historic accord in Washington D.C. that provides for the expansion of Palestinian self-rule. While we commend the accord, we voice the hope that it will enable the Palestinian people to achieve the objective of extending its authority over its own land and of building its national entity. My country also hopes that the progress achieved on the Palestinian-Israeli track will lead to the activation of the Syrian-Israeli and the Lebanese-Israeli tracks. Lack of progress on those two tracks is a negative signal that does not serve the interests of a just and comprehensive peace. If such peace is to be achieved, we believe that the

negotiators on all sides have to put behind them all the residual suspicions and political negativism of the past, free their political will and look at the present with a futuristic vision of a world that no longer knows geographical boundaries thanks to the technological progress we now witness in every aspect of life.

In Iraq, the Iraqi Government has yet to respond to all the requirements of the relevant Security Council resolutions so as to allow the lifting of the embargo imposed by the United Nations on Iraq. We, in common with others, were greatly surprised at the serious, important information disclosed recently by the Iraqi Government regarding its programme of weapons of mass destruction. Regardless of the reasons that led Iraq not to disclose these programmes in the past, the confidence of the international community in Iraq has been dealt a severe blow because Iraq had concealed this information in spite of the requests from the Special Commission. In the light of these new developments which necessitate the continuation of the work of the Special Commission for a long time to come, my country appeals to the international community to double its efforts towards mitigating the suffering of the brotherly people of Iraq. By the same token, Iraq is required, now more than ever before, to reconsider its rejection of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) which, in our view, provides Iraq with a good opportunity to reduce some of the suffering of the brotherly people of Iraq.

We call on Iraq once again seriously to provide all the information and means still in its possession to the Special Commission. We hope that Iraq's compliance and cooperation in this matter will give the United Nations access to the crucial information regarding the Iraqi programmes on weapons of mass destruction and pave the way towards the eventual lifting of the embargo from which the Iraqi people have endured record suffering over the past five years.

In the context of Iraq's commitment to Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 686 (1991), we call on the Iraqi Government to cooperate further with the tripartite Committee that deals with the question of Kuwaiti detainees and the expatriates of other countries detained in Iraq, and to provide the said committee with detailed information on those detainees. Any progress made in this direction will be viewed as a demonstration of the good intentions of Iraq and its desire to cooperate with other States.

In Somalia, despite the persistent efforts of the United Nations and other regional organizations, the situation in that country gives no cause for optimism due to the total disregard some Somali leaderships show towards the interests of the brotherly people of Somalia.

In Afghanistan, although the United Nations has deployed and continues to deploy special efforts to restore peace to this war-ravaged country, there is no abatement of the hostilities and bloodshed caused by the strife of the different factions in that country. On the other hand, we view with optimism the progress achieved in the peace processes undertaken by the United Nations in Angola, Mozambique, and Liberia, and call upon the international community to deploy all possible efforts towards the mitigation of the suffering of the people of Rwanda who continue to be in the grip of ethnic and political conflicts between the warring factions in their country.

In the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite the United Nations and the commendable efforts of its peace-keeping forces to halt the bloodshed in this fledgling republic in the heart of Europe, the insurrection of the Bosnian Serbs and their continued defiance of the international community have resulted in frustrating all those concerted efforts. The recent events in Krajina and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air raids on Serbian positions have restored a certain degree of balance between Bosnia and the Serbs who seem to understand nothing but the logic of force. This has shown the validity of the logical call to enable the Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to exercise its legitimate right to self-defence.

In this connection, obviously, the Agreement of Principle signed under the supervision of the Contract Group at Geneva on 3 September 1995 by the Foreign Ministers of the Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and the former Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) constitutes a significant step towards peace. However, it is the duty of the international community to exert great efforts to overcome the difficulties facing the United Nations and to ensure that the principles agreed on are translated into lasting peace in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There is no doubt that such regional issues face the United Nations with a real challenge and pose serious threats to international peace and security. In addition, they have created human tragedies as a result of such atrocities as "ethnic cleansing" and the horrors of famine

and mass killings, not to mention the heavy financial burden they have put on the resources of the world economy and on the people who have fallen victim to the atrocities. In the light of all this, how can the United Nations face up to all these responsibilities at a time when its ability to deploy efforts is receding because of the over-bureaucratization of its various organs and failure by many Member States to honour their financial obligations? The situation is complex, but it is one that can be dealt with by restructuring United Nations organs in a more cost-effective manner so that the goals set may be achieved over the short-, medium- and long-term in consonance with basic objectives so that the Organization may enter the coming century equipped with firm instructions to make international peace and security the basic underpinnings of social and economic development.

With regard to the Security Council, my country feels that while preserving the tasks entrusted to it, we must also find an effective mechanism to enable the General Assembly to make an effective contribution in dealing with crucial international issues so that all Member States may participate in implementing United Nations resolutions and programmes in line with the provisions of the Charter, in the interests of international peace and security as well as economic and social development. Proceeding from this, my delegation calls upon the international community to support the efforts of the United Nations as the principal body entrusted with addressing various crucial questions throughout the world. Those are our policies at all levels. At the regional level, my country seeks to build bridges of dialogue and cooperation between all countries in the belief that this serves the interests of international peace and security. We also seek to encourage and support all regional and international groupings in the same spirit and with the same goals in view. At the national level, my country deeply believes that the maintenance of regional and international peace provides the most important means of implementing our national economic and social plans. With God's will, we have managed to settle with our neighbours the problems regarding our borders, which has afforded us a golden opportunity to channel our national capabilities towards the implementation of our ambitious national economic and social programmes.

Benefiting from the past wealth of economic experience and in pursuit of the economic objective Oman charted 25 years ago, my Government, with the assistance of such international bodies as the World Bank and other economic experts, organized a conference on the future perspectives of the Omani economy by the year 2020, which was held at Muscat, the capital, on 3 and 4 June 1995. With the participation of a broad segment of the public and private sectors of Omani society and a select number of international organizations and world economic figures, that conference laid out the basic lines of the Omani strategy for future Omani development, among which are the development of human resources, the promotion of women's participation therein, the development of the private sector so that it may become the driving force of the national economy, the encouragement of economic diversity, the encouragement of a suitable economic balance between the economy of Oman and the rest of the world and the conservation of the environment and its exploitation for peaceful purposes. My Government's peaceful endeavour to implement those strategies represents the best means by which my country will enter the next century on a solid basis, that would enable the Omani people to expand their economic resources and benefit from the technological progress we feel will govern the world economy and all its means of production and marketing.

This option, with regard to the means of national development, will surely serve the cause of peace and security. God willing, we look forward to a future filled with promise for our future generations.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon the Foreign Minister of Singapore, His Excellency Mr. Shanmugam Jayakumar.

Mr. Jayakumar (Singapore): Allow me first to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, and Portugal, on his election to lead the General Assembly through this important fiftieth session. I should also like to record Singapore's appreciation to his distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire. I also take this opportunity to thank our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his continuing dedication to the purposes of the United Nations.

In recent years the United Nations has had much to do with peace-keeping and human rights. They are important matters, but the United Nations is not just about peace-keeping or human rights. International economic cooperation is one of the important purposes of the United Nations as defined by our Charter. Poverty breeds conflict, but abject poverty makes a mockery of all civil liberties.

Our Secretary-General's Agenda for Development should give cause for all of us to reflect on the United

Nations role in the world economy. Of the five decades of the existence of the United Nations, four have been dedicated to development. Vast sums have been expended, but with what result?

Specialized agencies like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) do not hit the headlines, but are the most successful institutions in the United Nations system. They make quiet, unglamorous, but no-less-valuable contributions to human dignity and international order than do the Blue Helmets or the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Unfortunately, however, there is a limit to what the specialized agencies can do to help uplift the individual national economies. The latest United Nations World Economic and Social Survey announces the good news that the global economy has reached the cruising speed of 3 per cent growth. But for many countries this news is somewhat abstract and irrelevant to their day-to-day concerns.

That same report speaks delicately of distinctions between robust, vulnerable and weak developing economies. This polite language only masks the continuing reality of degradation, poverty, misery, disease and death.

Ten years ago the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) officially classified 36 Member States as least developed. Five years ago this number had risen to 42, and as of August this year there were 48 least developed countries. All forecasts project an even more skewed distribution of global income. The marginalization of more than a quarter of the membership of the United Nations in the world economy must surely be recognized as a serious problem. Those Members cannot be shunted aside indefinitely without provoking a major breakdown of international order.

Yet today key development institutions are under attack. Indeed, the very role of the United Nations in the global economy risks marginalization.

Why is this so? First, lack of a consensus on a post-cold-war strategic rationale for development is one important factor. Secondly, the endemic tension between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, a contest for power and control, is another factor. Thirdly, the failure of Member States, especially major contributors, to pay their dues in full and on time has created severe budgetary pressures on the United Nations to cut back development programmes.

These, however, are only partial explanations. The key factor is the failure of the United Nations to respond to the central economic phenomenon of our time: the globalization of the international economy and the emergence of what has been termed a borderless world.

For better or for worse, sovereign nation-States will be around for a long time to come. Governments are and will continue to be key players in the world economy. But a model of sovereign States, interacting only at the margins of their existence, no longer adequately describes the contemporary world economy. Modern technology and communications have led to money, trade and investments flashing across borders in ways that Governments cannot control. This is redefining the very notions of resources, wealth and value.

Therefore, we have to cope with a globalized international economy in which national actions are no longer adequate or effective, but in which, at the same time, Governments and States still cannot be disregarded. Europe, the Americas and the Asia-Pacific region have responded in different ways, such as with the European Union (EU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and, in a looser form, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Africa is also looking at its own regional economic groupings. These experiments represent some of the most significant developments in contemporary international relations. They may define a post-cold-war structure for international order in the next century.

The United Nations, like its individual Members, is struggling to comprehend and catch up with the implications of a globalized international economy. But the United Nations has been more sluggish to respond than many of its Members.

When we speak of regionalization in the United Nations, we are referring primarily to the regional commissions, which, however, are entirely divorced from the important regional economic groupings. This is a symptom of a wider problem.

At a time when most significant developments in the world economy are taking place outside the United Nations, one can legitimately ask what the role of the United Nations is in the new world economy. There is a

danger that it will play no role at all unless it urgently takes stock of its current approach to economic issues.

Saving the United Nations from being relegated to irrelevance requires an attitudinal shift that cuts across both North and South. Member States from both the North and the South must accept a new discipline. We must forsake ideology for pragmatism and posturing for practicality in order to concentrate on a more focused and compact economic agenda. This will give the United Nations the tools it needs to cope with the new kind of global economy that is emerging.

The United Nations must emphasize its strengths, not its weaknesses. It is not the best forum to negotiate specialized and technical matters. Neither is the United Nations an executive body for matters of trade or finance; that role properly belongs to the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. The strengths of the United Nations are political, which is a plus because the new world economy demands political as well as technical responses.

The new globalized economy has sharply focused development issues that policy makers and theoreticians have grappled with for decades. The strictly economic debate over appropriate development strategies is over. Opting out is clearly not an option. It will only accelerate the pace of marginalization. However, it has become equally clear that the magic of the market is not enough.

Only the United Nations can meet the two resulting political challenges. They are, first, coping with the political consequences of rapid but uneven economic growth and, secondly, helping the least developed to build the institutions that will allow them to plug into the globalized economy. Let me elaborate.

First, the process of rapid growth in some countries has caused political tensions between the successful developing countries and the mature Western economies. The latter have continued to grow, but more slowly and without significant increases in employment or improvements in real living standards.

Job creation and job protection will certainly be high on the agendas of political leaders throughout the industrialized world for at least the next decade. There has been a concerted and sometimes very vocal effort to link economic issues to workers' rights, human rights, social conditions and environmental standards. Developing countries view this as bad faith, feeling that the industrialized countries are using any pretext to hobble and handicap the developing world.

The critical issue is not really the rights and wrongs of the case. It is managing shifts in relative positions of power. A way has to be found to contain the inevitable strains and stresses between the old rich and the newly affluent economies. Continuing tensions are debilitating and will slow growth for everyone.

The goal is to shape an international order that will both optimize conditions for growth and facilitate the rescue of the least developed countries. There will be little attention paid to their needs if there is constant jostling and tension between the successful developing countries and the mature economies.

There is therefore a need for overarching frameworks that can help manage relations between the successful developing countries and the mature economies. There is a need to impose a global coherence and discipline on the emerging international system built around regional economic groupings. This is not a function that can be performed by the Bretton Woods institutions or even the World Trade Organization. After all, the first reaction of Europe and the United States to the conclusion of the Uruguay Round was more assertive unilateralism.

To play a role in forging such frameworks, the United Nations must find the political will to reach genuine consensus — not just on paper — on a realistic global economic agenda. But this will require self-discipline.

When one reads the action plans and agendas of many United Nations economic bodies, it is sometimes a depressing exercise in political archaeology. Layer upon layer of issues, some dating back to the 1960s and the 1970s, are added with every passing session of the General Assembly and conference. Their relevance to contemporary problems is dubious.

What is very puzzling is that, in reality, most Member States have in actual national practice long since discarded the attitudes and policies which are still faithfully placed on the United Nations agenda and solemnly debated and discussed in an archaic annual ritual. United Nations economic bodies must therefore eschew the temptation to pretend to micro-manage international economic affairs by delving into the nitty-gritty of issues they sometimes imperfectly comprehend.

But I do not advocate a completely *laissez-faire* approach. A globalized economy urgently demands management precisely because it is rapidly moving beyond the control of even the most powerful. But it requires different management techniques. The day of the hegemonic manager of the international economic system is passing. In the new world economy, international order can be assured only by the development of rule-based multilateral regimes that define broad parameters for economic forces that are not susceptible to micro-management. So the United Nations is the only universal international Organization with a Charter that gives it a mandate to range across the spectrum of issues that require attention. If the United Nations can find the political will and self-discipline, it will be potentially well placed, in our view, to develop a genuine consensus on an agenda for such regimes.

Rule-based multilateral regimes are not just in the interest of small and weak States. The predictability and stability they confer benefits all of us. It will be increasingly uncomfortable and difficult for even the strongest to assert themselves unilaterally in a globalized economy where business, finance, trade and industry cannot always be neatly categorized along national lines. A blow aimed at an opponent's chin may end up bruising one's own shoulder. If the United Nations can develop consensus on an agenda, its relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization will naturally fall into place. It will clearly be their responsibility to flesh out and implement the global regimes on an agenda agreed to by the United Nations. But these institutions are correct to resist if, as is now all too often the case, the agenda is impractical and delves too deeply into matters of detail.

Secondly, the new globalized international economy has challenged the belief that developing countries could grow simply by relaxing controls and privatizing. This is a necessary but insufficient condition. In all of the most successful developing countries, good, strong and stable government has always played a key role. The World Bank's 1993 report entitled "The East Asian Miracle" reveals that the miracle was not so much a miracle after all. The secret was getting the macroeconomic fundamentals right. But that has been known for decades. Yet there has been no growth in much of the world. The difference was public policy. Developing countries that try to follow the East Asian model often fail, not because they do not know what the correct economic policies are, but because they lack the political underpinnings to make such policies stick. It is the government that will determine whether a country can plug into the fast moving global economy, or whether it will be bypassed.

Therefore, an urgent and delicate problem is how the United Nations can help the least developed to build government and political institutions that will enable them to plug into the globalized economy for development, without intruding too brashly into their domestic affairs. Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter is still the basic cornerstone of the United Nations. A multilateral approach to this sensitive question may be more acceptable than crude bilateralism.

But to deal realistically with this issue, the United Nations must set aside what has become a largely theological debate about the relationship between democracy, development and human rights — a phrase which has become part of the accepted language of development debates. But it is harmful and misleading if it implies an inevitable or simple linear causality. Of course, these concepts may well be linked in some way. But let us be clear that what we are really talking about is the relationship between democracy and human rights, on the one hand, and development, on the other. In other words, the causality is not linear, simple or inevitable. There is no question that repression is wrong and unhealthy and will stifle growth. There is also ample empirical evidence to prove beyond any doubt that economic growth requires political stability and good government. The terms "democracy" and "good government" are often used as if they were synonyms. Of course they overlap to a degree, but they are not the same thing.

Singapore's experience is that good government must be erected on three interrelated pillars: political accountability, a long-term orientation, and social justice. For long-term stability, Governments must govern with the support of the governed. Governments that do not deliver will not last. But this fact and the need for periodic free and fair elections do not prescribe any particular model of political system or ideology. So the clash and clamour of contending interests, street demonstrations and a rambunctious and abusive press may make for more exciting television for some Western audiences. It may even work for some countries. But more often than not it contradicts the second pillar of good government, which is long-term orientation. That requires the ability to resist populist and sectional pressures and, on occasion, administer bitter medicine to overcome economic challenges. Singapore's experience has convinced us that the first duty of government is to

govern, and also govern fairly. At times, this will require a firm hand.

The third element of good government is social justice. There should be equal opportunities for all groups. If the Government is fair to all ethnic, religious and social groups, it will not be beholden to any special interest. This is important in any society. It has been one of the reasons for Singapore's political stability and social cohesion. But Singapore does not hold itself up as a model, although we are happy, and prepared, to share our experience with anyone who may be interested. No one can prescribe any particular model of political development for any country. Indeed, when this is attempted dogmatically, with only a superficial understanding of the complexities of specific situations, it leads to disaster. Our basic assumption is a fundamentally pragmatic and pluralist one — that there are no models that can be applied everywhere.

So growth and stability are linked by a complex and subtle dynamic: an unrelenting search for an equilibrium between the rights of the individual, the claims of the community to which every individual must belong, and the no less urgent need for Governments to govern effectively and fairly. No balance between individual liberty and growth can be valid for all countries are for all time. Every society must find its own appropriate equilibrium in the context of its own historical and cultural experiences if the country is to progress.

Singapore straddles the developed and the developing worlds. Our population generally enjoys a comfortable standard of living, and our economy has a relatively sophisticated service and industrial sector, performing global roles. But Singapore also has structural vulnerabilities; it has resource limitations that prevent us from being fully developed as yet. Therefore, it is with a special perspective that we in Singapore observe the ongoing debates in and about the United Nations economic institutions. Sometimes we wonder: whose interests are really served by a prolonged debate, increasingly divorced from global economic reality? Is it the interest of those who want to preserve these institutions, or of those who would prefer to relegate them to some historical dead end? I do not have the answer to that question, but I raise it as one that merits urgent attention. I do not think there is much time left.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophonie of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Arsene Destin Tsaty-Boungou.

Mr. Tsaty-Boungou (Congo) (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly's choice of Mr. Freitas do Amaral to serve as President at this fiftieth session is a fitting tribute to his eminent qualities and to the role his country, Portugal, has always played in international relations. I would like to congratulate him on behalf of my delegation and assure him of our cooperation.

We are grateful to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, for the skilful way in which he reflected and conveyed our concerns throughout his mandate.

I would like to reaffirm the profound gratitude of the Government of Congo to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the concern he showed to find a settlement to the political crisis that overwhelmed my country in the first two years after the democratic election of Professor Pascal Lissouba as President of the Republic.

Despite the fact that the United Nations inherited the difficulties of what were often troubled times and despite its often controversial role, it remains the repository of hope for the peoples of the world. The fiftieth anniversary is a fitting time to look at what the Organization's experience has taught us so that we may be able to establish a more confident and optimistic idea of how the Organization and mankind as a whole will move into the third millennium.

This session with its inherent symbolism, coming as it does at an exceptional period in the development of international relations, places us squarely between the fading dogmas that for a long time seemed to inspire the perfect system of management and human development, and the universal desire of the most destitute people for greater political freedom, development and the assertion of their moral and cultural identity.

As countries once subjected to ideological, political and economic domination move steadfastly forward, the United Nations remains, as ever, the ideal vehicle for preventing upheaval from shattering world peace.

In other words, faced with the new world situation, this celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization can be analysed only in terms of a break with the past and a time to take stock of new realities in the face of the overriding need to establish new machinery to govern the international community.

The various scenes rightly described for us from this rostrum undoubtedly show the world as it is and as we would like it to be. I, therefore, endorse the concerns and proposals voiced here, particularly, as regards the restructuring of the United Nations system, the Agenda for Development. There are so many seemingly self-evident issues that will, I am sure, enjoy the consensual support of all delegations, as happened at the recent United Nations conferences, which have given our States a platform from which to deal with the major problems of the world.

From Rio to Beijing, via Vienna, Cairo and Copenhagen, we have established priorities and made commitments that we hope will be translated into action.

As the Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly noted in his report "An Agenda for Development", peace is the foundation for development. The persistence of hotbeds of tension in certain parts of the world is not conducive to the emergence of new prosperous nations. Quite the contrary, in the absence of peace, these hotbeds of tension thwart prospects for development more and more every day.

In this context, we should encourage the peoples of Angola and Liberia to continue along the difficult path to national reconciliation after the several years of fratricidal civil war they have endured.

We must be gratified by the strengthening of the peace process in the Middle East through the Israeli-Palestinian agreement of 28 September 1995.

We should, finally, hail the recent developments in the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina marked by the efforts of the parties to the conflict to seek ways and means to achieve peace.

Unfortunately, while expressing our satisfaction at the restoration of the democratic regime following the *coup d'état* in Sao Tome, thanks to international condemnation, we must denounce from this lofty rostrum, any seizure of power by armed force as has just happened once again in the Comoros.

Finally, we would like to express our great concern at the instability and insecurity that persist in Africa, particularly in the countries of the Great Lakes.

The situation in that part of the African continent is a human tragedy. There, as elsewhere in Africa where violence is rampant, ethnic hatred and intolerance have caused massive flows of refugees to flee to neighbouring countries.

This is what has happened in Zaire, a fraternal and neighbouring country which, from this rostrum, appealed for solidarity from the international community in helping it to overcome the consequences of this tragedy with respect for human dignity. We express the hope that this appeal will be heeded by the entire international community.

In the face of all this, it is not difficult to understand why Congo cannot fail to support the idea of holding a conference on peace and stability in that region. We wish to state that we are ready, as are other members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, to go along with this initiative in accordance with the Brazzaville Declaration on cooperation for peace and security in Central Africa. This Declaration, adopted after the Committee's seventh meeting on 1 September 1995, is truly a profession of faith, in which States reaffirm their determination to work towards the establishment of confidence, peace and security in the Central African region.

The valuable support which the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has constantly given to our Committee has contributed to the fruitful results our States have achieved. Furthermore, this support guarantees success in achieving the objectives of establishing a collective security system in Central Africa. We thank him once again.

Today, as in the past, the limits and sluggishness of most of the States of the African continent remain unchanged. They are due, on the one hand, to the overall trend towards acceptance of stereotypes and, on the other hand, to the fact that the requirements of modern times are out of kilter with the basic values underpinning our societies.

Therefore, the democratization of institutional life, which we have embraced victoriously also seems to be a breeding-ground for long-contained contradictions. Here, they manifest themselves as conflict, even fratricidal wars. My own country, Congo, has not been spared these post-democratic upheavals and vagaries.

Allow me to refrain from any dire descriptions which the images of the tragedy experienced by the people of Congo would conjure up. This is because I take great pride in expressing the hope of a new African

political class, to which I belong, that it will be able to follow in the footsteps of great democratic nations and banish evil for ever.

This new generation would like to pioneer new governance. By that I mean a new way of exercising power, unflawed by hereditary belligerent instincts, that takes account of the psychological and moral aspects of our civilization and the specific features of the societal environment without jeopardizing the universal values that guarantee life with dignity.

In truth, I would like to invite everyone here to share in the heartfelt cry of the citizen of a country which, having embarked on the road to the democratization of its institutions and thus the free choice by the people of their leaders, has turned its back on wanton and barbaric violence.

This violence was dictated by the obsession with power on the part of those who lost the elections — power at all costs, absolute power. Other examples on the African continent support this grim picture.

The mid-term review of the democratization process — a review that began in Africa three years ago — prompts me to put the following questions to the Assembly, in view of our societies' crisis situation:

With respect to multi-ethnic States, is it legitimate to assume that the mere codification of constitutional norms copied from older democracies is sufficient to transform feudal entities into democratic ones and so move on to a market economy, and to move from autocratic tribal rule to that of intellectual and political elites chosen for their keen sense of duty in the service of nations?

Is it legitimate to believe and accept that simply subordinating our assistance to African countries to the need for their democratization will suffice to persuade their former leaders — who for two or three decades governed our States without opposition or any sharing of power — of the virtues of democracy?

Such a change, in our view, can take place only as part of a lengthy process. Furthermore, an undoubted requirement is that Africa accede to democracy by conducting an in-depth analysis of its contemporary political history and then adopt rules for political governance that have consensus as a necessary dimension, rules that can ensure power-sharing by the major political groups and the necessary stability for democratic institutions. In this connection, my country's experience has been a sort of litmus test.

No solution could have been found without the personal and unwavering dedication of the President of our Republic, His Excellency Mr. Pascal Lissouba, whose wisdom and keen sense of dialogue served as a catalyst. On the basis of our own social values, traditions, realities and history, our Head of State, without underestimating the relevance of the principle that elections are necessary to democracy, has assumed the role of a real paterfamilias, gathering around him Congolese people of every persuasion.

In this spirit, at the initiative of the President of the Republic, a Forum on the Culture of Peace, organized jointly by the Congolese Government and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was held in November 1994 in Brazzaville. The decisions taken there have enabled us to make a fresh start. Two of them pertain to the reorganization of the police, with a view to better adapting it to its traditional task as a republican police force, and to the restoration of the power of the judiciary.

Several months later, following political consultations, a broader Government that included the opposition was set up. The current power-sharing between those who represent institutional legitimacy by virtue of being elected and those who did not receive the popular vote attests to a consensual undertaking based on the idea of participatory democracy. This approach is rooted in the manner in which our village communities were long governed and reduces the sources of conflict that accession to power could have triggered.

A democratization process that unfolds in this way has the necessary resources at its disposal to bear fruit, if there is peace. The quest for peace is therefore a crucial requirement for our States. The democratization of institutions will remain a pipe dream if there is no will, on the part either of the African political elites or of the international community, to approach the democratic process in Africa in a manner that takes into account both the quality of the political classes that governed from independence until the beginning of democratization and the need to restore peace where obstacles are placed in its path or it is directly threatened.

In order to put the idea of participatory democracy into effect, the Congolese Government, once peace had been restored, began a national programme of

administrative and economic decentralization in order to enable the various political forces to exercise political power at a more grass-roots level. Today, town, village and regional councils have been established that take part in the decentralized governance of various communities. Thus, decentralization is a prime example of one of the major steps in power-sharing.

But in the final analysis, in Congo as elsewhere in Africa — especially in Central Africa — peace remains fragile. It is still, to all intents and purposes, at the mercy of the political appetites of those who believe that, in the name of democracy and regardless of the people's choice, they have the divine right to be in power and the obligation to oppose those who accede to it.

This observation led me to ask the seventh ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was held in Brazzaville from 28 August to 1 September 1995 and over which I had the honour of presiding, to think about the following point.

Democracy, which we all wholeheartedly aspire to, will be doomed to failure if we do not take the wise decision to equip ourselves with not only the necessary intellectual means but also, and above all, the political will to reflect on the kind of government our countries should have in the world of today. This reflection must necessarily be based on history and on the moral and legal rules that have provided our various communities with peace, stability and respect for the rights of the individual and for property rights. Such reflection will be useful, I believe, if we are to spare our peoples the ordeal of fratricidal wars.

Clearly, democracy cannot be a source of peace or take hold lastingly in our countries if accession to political power on the part of a group of persons is regarded by other members of the international community as the exercise of power by one ethnic group or a coalition of ethnic groups. Likewise, to exercise moderation and restraint is the moral duty of those who win elections and who wield power. This is a crucial requirement in order to give a feeling of security to those whose past political practices have left them convinced that they can be in power only if one or several members of their own ethnic group or of their region are also involved. This is the evil that has been eating away at Africa and at its path towards true democratization.

In fact, a democratic regime is without any doubt the one that will enable our countries to promote the flourishing of their elites and to ensure their development and safety. However, as members will note, our collective aspiration to greater freedom and equality has at times borne the seeds of destruction. This is because the transplant that the surgeons of democracy thought they needed to perform automatically on Africa — without taking into account the possibility that certain of its elements might be rejected — has come up against our own social realities, which are characterized by the fact that for all time, and especially since independence, politics has been, and remains, the royal road to upward social mobility.

In such an environment, the rotation of power — one of the basic rules of classic democratic regimes — is perceived as a way of marginalizing that part of the community that loses the political elections. The rule of the rotation of power, which is perceived and applied by the winners of elections as a means of removing from power those who have lost — which in older democracies is a normal occurrence — is viewed in our countries as a source of conflict, as my own country's example shows.

In such circumstances, should not the establishment of a democratic regime in our countries be understood, in the context of a consensual vision of governance, as a transitory stage towards a democracy that would include the classic concept of the rotation of power?

It would seem wise today to tackle the democratic phenomenon by including in the rules and in the basic foundation of democracy a peacemaking dimension that, while stemming from our socio-political realities and our own world view, would fit into a global framework. The rotation of political power would, in this transitional stage, take on a new, less conflictual dimension, while remaining one of the elements of genuine democracy. Such an approach would confer greater legitimacy on those who are elected.

The international community is therefore once again called upon to help Africa bring peace to itself and to provide itself with stable democratic regimes. This is the only way that Africa's development can be achieved.

May this historic session of the General Assembly be a decisive turning-point for new victories ushering in a better world and an Africa moving forward towards democracy and progress.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.